

Memo: Connecting Interview Questions to Specific Hypotheses *

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Hypotheses and Relevant Interview Questions

Different sections of the interview instrument are linked to different steps of the theory presented above. This section briefly maps the theoretical expectations/hypotheses onto specific sets of questions in the interview protocol to show what data are being collected to substantiate different parts of the theory. Under each key hypothesis, relevant questions are explained. The question numbers that correspond to the interview instrument in the appendix are listed in parentheses at the end of each explanation.

1. *Hypothesis: Individuals who have experienced violent loss will respond to the trauma with anger, more so than with other emotions like sadness, fear, etc.*

- Questions to test this hypothesis ask, in an open-ended way, for respondents to think back to the time right after the homicide and describe how they felt at the time. In order to avoid priming respondents to think about anger, respondents are asked to fill complete the Positive/Negative Affect Scale (PANAS), an extremely common clinical instrument which asks respondents to rate ten emotions on a scale of one to five based on how strongly they feel them (Watson, Clark and Tellegen, 1988). The PANAS scale helps respondents identify emotions without leading them toward any one in particular. It has been shown to be valid for asking respondents to think retrospectively about emotions they felt at some specific time in the past (Sloan and Kring, 2007). (4.1)
- The interviewer will follow-up on the two highest rated emotions from the PANAS questionnaire, and ask whether those emotions made the respondent feel like there was something they needed/wanted to do in response. These open-ended responses will be scored for emotional content in R using the NRC emotions lexicon, a commonly-used emotion lexicon for machine coding sentiments including anger, fear, and sadness (Mohammad and Turney, 2010; Mohammad, 2016; Mohammad, Shutova and Turney, 2016). (4.1, 4.2, 3.1, 3.2)
- To compare emotional responses to family members who are not interviewed, respondents will be asked to refer to the household roster collected at the beginning of the interview and comment on whether other family members would fill out the PANAS scale the same way, and to say how they would differ. (4.3)
- To account for the possibility a particularly likely alternative explanation (that the main emotion after violent trauma is fear), questions specifically asking about feelings of safety and behaviors related to increasing safety will be included in this section. (4.2)

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- Two different sets of questions are designed to substantiate the blame condition and desire-to-punish action tendency of anger by asking directly about who the respondent (and individuals on the family roster) blames, and what they would do to the perpetrator if it were up to them alone. (3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 5.4)
 - Finally, three clinical batteries, common measures of trait anger and trait fear plus a version of the Big-5 personality inventory, are used to assess a sort of baseline to which respondents' emotional responses to violent trauma can be compared (Mondak et al., 2010; Mick et al., 2014; Kramer, 2010). Individuals who score high on trait anger, for instance, are more likely to experience anger at smaller stimuli, so finding that they are angry in response to violent trauma provides less confirmatory information than finding the same response in a non-trait angry individual. (Section 6)
2. *Hypothesis: Angry individuals are likely to attempt to punish the perpetrator unless punishment is done by a credible third party, or is unfeasible for some other reason*
- The interviewer will know beforehand whether the perpetrator in question was ever prosecuted for murdering the respondent's relative. Depending on whether or not this external punishment condition was fulfilled, the interview will include a series of questions about the respondent's experience with the state's attorney and the justice process. These questions will substantiate two components of the hypothesis. First, asking respondents to report on their interactions with the justice system will help establish how much they identify the system as acting on their behalf. Second, open-ended questions about the respondent's (and family members') level of satisfaction after the state justice process will help adjudicate whether or not third-party justice has an effect on levels of anger, and desires to punish the perpetrator. These open ended responses will be analysed using the same emotion lexicon described above. (3.8, 3.9)
 - Another set of questions about attempted punishment asks the respondent to identify what their preferred punishment would be, the extent to which they are satisfied with the punishment (or lack thereof) that actually occurred, to what extent other people in the family feel differently, and whether anyone in the family has talked about, or attempted to carry out punishment themselves. In combination with the series of questions that asks about justice conditions and knowledge of who the perpetrator is, these questions should identify whether the mediating factors of external justice and feasibility work in the way predicted by the theory. (5.4)
 - A final set of questions attempts to gauge the respondent's sense of their relationship to the state, and determine whether they identify the state as acting on their behalf. If respondents identify the state as acting on their behalf as a "credible" third party punisher, the effect of state justice should "quench" anger. If the state is not credible, or perceived as not acting on the respondent's behalf, anger should persist regardless of state justice. The interview asks questions about the respondent's attitudes toward/experiences with

the state, and about whether their feeling toward the perpetrator changed at any point, as the theory predicts it should if state justice quenches anger. Questions in this section are adapted from common sociology survey questions about attitudes toward government (Bechert and Quandt, 2010; Smith et al., 2015). (3.6, 3.7, 4.4, 2.16, 2.18, 2.19, 2.20, 2.21, 2.22)

3. *Hypothesis: If punishing the perpetrator is unfeasible for some reason, angry individuals should displace their emotions onto a new target (the state, their community, etc.), changing their behavior and attitudes toward that target*

- First, a set of demographic/behavioral baselines help establish a point of comparison for this hypothesis. Questions ask about respondent's relationship to their family, relationship to neighborhood and geographic community, the role of religion in their life and their level of political involvement (Smith et al., 2015). (2.1-2.15)
- A second set of questions asks respondents to reflect on how their relationship with/involvement in community institutions, region, political institutions, and especially family have changed since experiencing violent trauma. Open-ended responses to these questions will, as above, be evaluated using the NRC Emotion Lexicon. (5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.6)

References

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